

MINUTES
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 05, 2020

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW54

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Martin, Vice Chair Souza, Senators Heider, Lee, Harris, Burtenshaw, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Martin** called to order the meeting of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee (Committee) at 3:01 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **Dave Jeppesen**, Director of the Department of Health and Welfare (Department), presented the budget report, strategic plan, and overall update on where they are as a Department. The mission of the Department is to protect and promote the safety of Idahoans.

Mr. Jeppesen described the past year, which included visiting with Department employees and at each office location throughout the state.

Mr. Jeppesen said one of the things he focused on during the summer was to create a strategic plan and for the Department to be held accountable. See attachment 1. Four goals and objectives were defined within the plan and they are reviewed each month, starting with goal one the first week, goal two the second week, and so on. This has kept them focused, and they have accomplished 34 percent of the tasks that are in the plan. The four goals are as follows:

1. Ensuring affordable, available health care that works
2. Protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults
3. Helping Idahoans become as healthy and self-sufficient as possible
4. Strengthening the public's trust and confidence in the Department

Goal 1 is to have the cost of Medicaid increase at or below the increase of tax revenues. The objective of Goal 2 is to ensure all children who have experienced abuse or neglect have safe and permanent homes. **Mr. Jeppesen** stated that one objective of Goal 3 is in regard to suicide prevention. The Department is also working with schools on the lifelong resiliency and well-being program called "Sources of Strength." Also regarding self-sufficiency, there are employment and training programs provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for the people who are eligible to work. In Goal 4, the Department has made progress toward compliance with the Red Tape Reduction Act, but more work needs to be done to simplify, to make less restrictive, and to make it easier for businesses and citizens to operate, but not at the expense of safety.

Mr. Jeppesen continued his presentation by giving an overview of the budget. Personnel costs and operating expenditures account for 12.5 percent of the fiscal year 2020 original appropriation. Trustee and benefit payments account for about 87 percent of the original appropriation. **Mr. Jeppesen** told the Committee there were two items not presently in the budget which could possibly be requested in the future. They are ambulatory surgical centers and upgrading the technology systems. See attachment 2.

In closing, **Mr. Jeppesen** talked about the home visitation program and relayed a story about a young man and his family's experience with the program. He said the Department is committed to delivering services that provide for the safety and well-being of Idaho's families as effectively and efficiently as possible.

DISCUSSION: Several Committee members commented on the Director's enthusiasm for his job, the exceptional job he is doing, and the focus he brings to his job. Other discussion was related to the budget, with **Senator Lee** explaining the need for funding.

RS 27492 **Mr. Jeppesen** presented **RS 27492**, a Senate Concurrent Resolution, that highlights the need to improve the Idaho Behavioral Health System. This resolution recognizes the requirement for collaboration among all three branches of state government, local governments, and community partners, and endorses the creation of a 13-member Idaho Behavioral Health Council that will be tasked with developing a statewide strategic plan. It will include action-oriented, time-bound recommendations to the Legislature, to the Governor, and to the Idaho Supreme Court, by October 31, 2020. The action-oriented recommendations will utilize the significant amount of resources that the state already invests in behavioral health by creating a more coordinated, integrated, and collaborative model with the goal of effective behavioral health outcomes for Idahoans and a better return on the investment of public resources. Since the Idaho Behavioral Health Council will have representatives from all three branches of state government, it will be created by an executive order from the Governor, and officially recognized by the Idaho Supreme Court through a proclamation.

MOTION: **Vice Chair Souza** moved to send **RS 27492** to print. **Senator Heider** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

Chairman Martin welcomed several family medicine resident students and asked them to stand and be recognized.

PRESENTATION: **Beth Oppenheimer**, Executive Director, of the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), reported on the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5). Governor Little authorized Idaho AEYC to apply for the federal grant on November 5, 2019; on December 18, 2019, it was awarded in the amount of \$3.3 million. This one-year grant will focus on research, planning, collaboration, and coordination on early childhood systems across the state. Five specific activities must be addressed, per federal requirements:

1. A statewide needs assessment plan;
2. A statewide strategic plan;
3. Maximizing parental choice and knowledge;
4. Sharing best practices; and,
5. Improving overall quality of early childhood care and education.

Ms. Oppenheimer said their overall expected outcome is to better align the current systems and identify areas of improvement in the early childhood program and to better support the youngest children as they enter kindergarten. See attachment 3.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Heider** inquired about the grant that is funded for just one year. **Ms. Oppenheimer** replied that President Trump has increased funding for preschool development grants in his budget and she is hopeful that they will have the opportunity to apply for some implementation over the next couple of years.

Senator Jordan inquired if the implementation goal was to put a child in the third grade, and would the third grade reading assessment be applicable. **Ms. Oppenheimer** said they would be looking at the needs assessment to see what is working and what is not working.

Senator Lee asked about home visitation, what resources are available to measure it, and if the information would be available by the end of the year. **Ms. Oppenheimer** replied that the needs assessment should be completed by July-August 2020. They hope to align all the different systems so that they can get the research and the data that is needed to effectively and efficiently move forward.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Martin** adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Senator Martin
Chair

Margo Miller
Secretary

Juanita Budell
Assistant to the Secretary